
OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT BUDGET ANALYST REPORT

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Amendments to the Permanent Rules of Council

OVERVIEW

At the meeting of March 2, 2009, the City Council will discuss various amendments to the Permanent Rules of Council contained within the Municipal Code. At the discussions held previously by the Rules Committee, the IBA was asked to conduct a fiscal analysis of one of the items: to hold one meeting per month in the evening, from 4:30 to 9:00PM, in the Council Chambers. This report provides information pursuant to this request.

FISCAL/POLICY DISCUSSION

IBA staff consulted with the City Clerk, Executive Detail Officers and the Building Supervisor to understand the potential additional costs that could be incurred by hosting one evening meeting per month. The potential costs identified include:

- Additional building security
- Staff overtime
- Meal provision
- Additional utility costs

The following reviews consideration for each of these items:

Additional Building Security

Based on consultations with the Executive Detail Officers and the Building Supervisors, it is proposed that evening meetings would require the use of four security guards, as opposed to the typical one guard for nighttime hours. Two guards would be used for the screening process for the public, and two others would be charged with staffing the front door, monitoring other floors of the building and other security duties.

The City's current contract with Wackenhut provides for a rate of \$19.10 per guard hour. Three additional guards for an estimated four additional hours would cost approximately \$230 per night meeting.

Staff Overtime

There is the potential for additional costs for overtime for staff. While many staff members that support the Council meetings are unclassified, and do not earn overtime, some support may be required by staff that are not exempt. In the City Clerk's office, efforts could be made to modify and flex schedules in order to avoid most overtime. In most cases, the Clerk believed staff overtime could be avoided through modifying schedules and utilizing minimal and/or unclassified staff where possible.

Additional staff overtime may be incurred by other departments having an item heard at Council at the evening meetings, if non-exempt employees are required to attend. Encouraging flexible scheduling by management, where possible and allowed, may be emphasized to minimize these costs.

Meal Provision

Because the proposal is to conduct these meetings between 4:30 and 9:00PM, it is understood that Council Members and other staff will likely need access to a meal sometime during those hours. Should the Council and staff pay for and coordinate their own meals, no additional cost to the City may be incurred. However, if the City provides for this function, the cost for food, such as pizza or sandwiches, may be \$200-300 or more, based on historical experience.

Some overtime may be incurred for meal provision, as well. The Clerk estimated that 3-3.5 hours of overtime for two staff members may be required to coordinate logistics for this service. At a fully-loaded cost of approximately \$31 per hour per person, the additional monthly cost for staff time is estimated at \$217. Total costs for meal provision is therefore estimated at \$417-517.

Additional Utility Costs

Generally during off hours, the building heating and cooling systems are ramped down. However, temperatures would be more strictly maintained during those hours on the evenings Council meetings are held. In addition, lighting that is normally dimmed or off during these hours will be utilized. Additional costs for these utilities were not able to be estimated at this time, since they are not broken down in a manner suitable for identifying incremental costs. We may be able to return with more information over time, particularly if the night meetings are implemented and we could perform a comparative analysis with trending data.

Total Costs

As referenced, total additional costs would depend upon Council direction as to meal provisions. The following table summarizes the estimated potential costs for both scenarios:

Potential Costs: Night Council Meeting	Scenario A: Meal Provided	Scenario B: No Meal
Additional Security	\$ 230	\$ 230
Staff overtime	\$ -	\$ -
Meal provision	\$ 467	\$ -
TOTAL	\$ 697	\$ 230

Other Cities

The IBA would also note that we conducted a survey of other municipalities and their evening meeting practices. We surveyed seven cities and received valuable information back from six. Three other large cities surveyed were Oakland, San Jose and San Francisco. Two other San Diego County cities consulted were Carlsbad and Solana Beach. We also received information from Santa Barbara.

Other cities experienced an array of additional costs for their evening meetings. For the most part, cities did not experience additional overtime costs, due to the use of exempt staff. As noted above, some exceptions were for non-exempt staff required to attend a particular hearing. Most cities did not experience additional security costs or did not track this information. With regard to the provision of food, experience and costs vary, as displayed in the table below.

Finally, while collecting the above data, we also gathered some ancillary information about frequency and times of evening meetings. This information is also provided in the table below for information purposes. Important to note, the City of San Francisco holds meetings at night only if the regularly scheduled meeting runs over.

City	Frequency of Meetings Per Month	Start Times	Meal Provided?
Oakland	2	6:00 PM	no
Carlsbad	4	6:00 PM	yes
Solana Beach	2	6:00 PM	yes
San Jose	2	7:00 PM	no
Santa Barbara	1	6:00 PM	no
San Francisco	varied	n/a	no

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